

our colleagues of our efforts to expand the availability of alternative fuel infrastructure to assist American consumers who are increasingly looking to buy automobiles that can run on alternative fuels such as biodiesel, E-85 ethanol, natural gas, and other such fuels.

American automakers—Ford, GM, Daimler Chrysler—alternative energy groups, and environmental organizations have all expressed to Congress that the leading hurdle to allowing consumers greater access to vehicles that run on alternative fuels is the fact that there just aren't enough refueling stations across the country.

For instance, while there are over 6 million flex-fuel vehicles nationwide that can run on either gasoline or E-85 ethanol, less than 1 percent of all gas stations provide consumers with the option of fueling up with an alternative fuel that is American made, cleaner for the environment, and reduces our Nation's overreliance on foreign sources of oil.

On Monday of this week, the House of Representatives, by a vote of 355 to 9, overwhelmingly passed a bill by Congressman MIKE ROGERS from Michigan—H.R. 5534—that authorizes grants up to \$30,000 for gas stations, and other eligible entities under the Clean Cities Program at the Department of Energy—including Government entities—that place in service alternative fuel infrastructure.

Subject to annual appropriations, Congressman ROGERS' bill authorizes the use of penalties that are collected annually from foreign automakers who violate the CAFE standard for fuel efficiency.

This House-passed bill is currently being held at the Senate desk and Senator SALAZAR and I, along with Senators TALENT and HAGEL, have a substitute amendment that has the support of the majority leader and has been cleared by the chairman of the Commerce Committee. Again, I reiterate that this is simply an authorization and has no mandatory spending.

Our goal is to pass this substitute proposal by unanimous consent and send it back to the House of Representatives—which has indicated that they are prepared to pass the modified proposal so it can be enacted into law.

Mr. President, for the information of my colleagues, while the Senate is currently debating a bill to expand the availability of oil and natural gas that is located off the coast of the U.S., we shouldn't miss the opportunity to pass a modified version of the alternative fuel grant legislation that the House overwhelmingly passed earlier this week.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I am pleased to have introduced the Railroad Retirement Technical Improvement Act that would ensure that the Department of the Treasury continues to distribute retirement benefits rather

than a nongovernmental disbursing agent. This legislation is similar to a bill that was introduced in the House of Representatives by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman DON YOUNG of Alaska. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, which will continue to allow our Nation's retired railroad employees to securely receive the benefits for which they have worked so hard.

The Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 calls for a nongovernmental financial institution to replace the Treasury Department as the disbursing agent of retirement benefits. While I have consistently supported greater efficiency in government by allowing the private sector a greater role in providing some services, I believe that further analysis of this issue has shown that the Treasury Department is the most efficient and secure conduit to distribute these important benefits.

While the Treasury Department has a long track record of disbursing checks on a massive scale, very few private disbursing agents would have the ability to handle this load at the same costs incurred by the Treasury. It has been estimated that the average cost of using a nongovernmental benefit disbursing agent would total \$2.9 million each year. In contrast, having the Treasury maintain its role as disbursing agent would only cost \$800,000 annually, a \$2.1 million annual savings.

In addition to the fiscal concerns that have arisen regarding transferring disbursing responsibilities for benefits, identity theft is a looming threat because of the need to transfer personal information of private individuals from the Treasury Department to the private sector. The specter of this threat is growing, and I do not believe our Nation's retirees should be concerned with who may have access to their personal information.

A benefit in addition to cost savings and security is that unlike a private vendor, the Treasury Department has the ability to use debt collection tools such as withholding tax refunds that are not available to the private sector. The Treasury Department's ability to make collections on overpaid benefits is easier, cheaper, and more efficient than having a private sector agent make the same collections.

The advantages of securing benefits for our retired railroad workers and saving taxpayer dollars are obvious. The maintenance of these benefits under the realm of the Treasury Department is a cost-efficient and secure means of distributing benefits, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN HONOR OF THE RETIREMENT OF COLONEL BRUCE W. SUDDUTH

• Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the retire-

ment of Col. Bruce W. Sudduth from the U.S. Air Force.

A father, a husband, a teacher, and a decorated Air Force colonel—on July 28, 2006, Colonel Sudduth will retire from the Air Force after honorably serving for 25 years. During that time, he has earned the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, and the Combat Readiness Medal.

Colonel Sudduth began his illustrious military career in 1981 when he entered the Air Force through Officer Training School. His first assignment was as an intercontinental ballistic missile launch officer at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, where he earned wing responsibilities as a weapon system instructor, standardization evaluation, and flight commander. In 1985, he was selected for project TOP HAND at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. In 1988, he was selected for the last ASTRA class and was assigned to Air Force Studies and Analysis; later he was assigned to the Air Force Chief of Staff's staff group.

In 1990, Colonel Sudduth attended the last class of Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, VA. He was then assigned to the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff, JSTPS, Future Concepts Branch at Offutt Air Force Base, NE. Upon the elimination of JSTPS and the creation of the United States Strategic Command, USSTRATCOM, he was assigned to the Strategy and Policy Division. In 1993, Colonel Sudduth was assigned as the 341st field missile maintenance supervisor at Malmstrom Air Force Base, MT. In 1994, he assumed command of the 490th Missile Squadron at Malmstrom AFB. Under his direction, the 490th participated in combat operations after 3 years of noncombat duty. He was selected in 1996 to attend the Naval War College at Newport, RI. In 1997, he was assigned to the USSTRATCOM Strategy and Policy Division as the chief of the Strategy Branch. Upon selection for colonel, he served as USSTRATCOM senior controller, standardization evaluation chief. That same year, in addition to his duties as colonel, he earned a master's degree in national security studies from the Naval War College.

In April 2001, Colonel Sudduth assumed command of the 91st Operations Group, Minot Air Force Base, ND. In April 2003, he was assigned as the senior special assistant to the commander, USSTRATCOM. Colonel Sudduth became the executive director of the Strategic Advisory Group in June 2004.

Colonel Sudduth graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1973, earning a bachelor of science in education. He received a master of education in administration and supervision at Central Missouri State University in 1983. Prior to joining the Air Force, in another service to